



The International Small Group Tree Planting Program

What is The International Small Group Tree Planting Program?

The International Small Group Tree Planting Program, known as TIST, helps communities in and around Kenya’s forests plant trees to improve their lives. The program harnesses the power of small groups who choose to unite for a common purpose and a better life. Farmers are valued as local experts who know first-hand the impact of deforestation and drought. The program is supported by a Global Development Alliance comprised of USAID, the Clean Air Action Corporation, and the Institute for Environmental Innovation, a US-based NGO that provides the farmer training and other capacity building. USAID’s \$7.5 million investment leverages more than \$11 million that the Clear Air Action Corporation has invested in developing carbon offset methods, monitoring technology and pilot projects.

What does The International Small Group Tree Planting Program do?

The International Small Group Tree Planting Program encourages farmers to transition from subsistence to success. Training and collaboration techniques empower members to become environmental leaders in their communities. TIST members learn to develop nurseries, plant trees to improve their land, recognize medicinal plants, and use water and wood efficiently.

TIST provides hard-working farmers, both women and men, an annual stipend for each live tree, plus access to future, long-term profits, from the global market for greenhouse gas credits. The trees TIST members plant store carbon by capturing and containing it as the tree grows. This stored carbon can be sold to environmentally conscious individuals, companies, and industrialized nations in the international carbon market to offset the carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere.

With USAID support, TIST received approval from the Kenya Forest Service for a Participatory Forest Management Plan that will allow communities to develop forest resources in forest reserves and use the buffer zone for sustainable use.

How is The International Small Group Tree Planting Program making a difference?

In Kenya, over 53,000 TIST farmers have planted more than seven million trees, verifying their condition and location with award-winning, sophisticated methods on hand-held computers. TIST farmers around Mt. Kenya have already earned nearly \$20 million from the carbon market. TIST members receive regular cash payments to compensate them for planting and nurturing their trees for long-term growth. This early incentive encourages the farmers to care for trees during the critical years while they are small, before they provide other valuable benefits. TIST farmers will receive 70% of the profits on the sale of carbon credits on the global carbon markets.

TIST provides diverse benefits to participants who planted trees, practiced conservation farming, and used improved cook stoves. The members reported an

USAID/Kenya-Lynn Johnson, Ripple Effect Images



TIST is committed to forest restoration through tree planting and education. The members have planted more than seven million trees.

Project Duration and Budget:

March 2006 - September 2014

\$7.52 million

Who implements The International Small Group Tree Planting Program?

The Institute for Environmental Innovation

Where does The International Small Group Tree Planting Program work?

Embu, Meru, Mara, and Nanyuki

average total added income value of \$433 per member over the course of their participation.

What key challenges does International Small Group Tree Planting Program face?

Two rules established by the Government of Kenya have posed potential future hurdles for carbon validation and verification. As long as the Farm Forestry Rules remain in their current form, they will undermine TIST farmers and any other reforestation effort that tries to use carbon credits as a financial tool.

TIST mobile website improves information and reporting

In August 2012, the program launched a new version of the TIST website, which is accessible via mobile phones. Members of the TIST Leadership Council, Quantifiers, Cluster Service Team members, TIST farmers and other interested individuals use this resource to access the information they need to manage program activities and to access training resources. They also use the website to create work plans and report their accomplishments.

At the program level, TIST leaders use the mobile website to create and share work plans, budgets, and results. It is being used at Cluster meetings to provide members with general Cluster information, including meeting dates, contact information for elected leaders, names of Small Group members and grove information. This information was commonly requested from the field, but remained difficult to access until the TIST mobile site was launched. Information is now available in real time to those who need it, without requiring the user to send a request to US staff to generate such a report. This has saved time and increased the productivity both in Kenya and in the US.

Additionally, Quantifiers have been able use TIST Mobile to identify overlapping groves and work with Cluster Representatives and Small Group members to correct these errors and improve data quality.

TIST Mobile has been well received in the field, and people are motivated to learn. With continued training and follow-up, it should be fully adopted. TIST Mobile will continue to be improved and used as an integrated information management system.

"From TIST/mobile web, group status is accessible and I find it easy to give group members information. I can actually know what others TIST servants have planned to do." *Peter Mithiru, TIST Quantifier and Cluster Servant*



Mobile technology contributes to effective, real-time management of the International Small Group Tree Planting Program.

For more information:

Azharul Mazumder, Team Leader, Environment and Natural Resources Management
USAID/Kenya
P.O. Box 629 00621
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 20 862 2841
Email: azmazumder@usaid.gov

Enock Kanyanya, Activity Manager
USAID/Kenya
P.O. Box 629 00621
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 20 862 2341
Email: ekanyanya@usaid.gov

Charlie Williams, Clean Air Action Corporation
The International Small Group and Tree Planting (TIST) Program
Phone: 918.747.8749 | 918.510.6158
Email: charliewilliams@cleanairaction.com